

Event title	2025 Operational Activities for Development segment (OAS) of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
Date	Online– Thursday 22 nd May 2025
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Topic:	Operationalizing durable solutions at country level; progress and challenges in transitioning from humanitarian to development responses for IDPs in Iraq; coordination and leadership at the country level — how UNCTs, RCs, and governments work together to embed IDP solutions in national development plans

Excellencies, colleagues,

It's an honour to join this panel as the first Resident Coordinator to speak on the topic of development needs for internal displacement, I take this as a strong signal that the international community sees solutions to displacement not only as a humanitarian imperative, but as a development and governance challenge that should be addressed through long-term, and nationally anchored strategies.

Iraq is one of the countries most affected by internal displacement in the past decade. While over 5 million people have returned, thousands remain in protracted displacement. In the early days of ISIS defeat, solutions to displacement were met through emergency and humanitarian assistance programmes. But the UN system in Iraq has worked hard to shift this imperative: from the humanitarian clusters system to development coordination, from direct service delivery to supporting the government as the first responders, and from short-term aid to long-term recovery.

In Iraq, our strategic anchor for this transition is the **Durable Solutions Roadmap**, a framework we developed after extensive consultations with the Government of Iraq to guide our collective work. It reflects a whole-of-government and whole-of-UN approach.

The roadmap is structured around four commitments:

1. **Guaranteeing the right to safe housing**, *including property compensation and housing support.*
2. **Expanding access to essential services and infrastructure**, *such as electricity, water, education, and health.*
3. **Overcoming political and security barriers to return**, *through intention surveys, stakeholder engagement, and localized peacebuilding.*
4. **Ensuring long-term inclusion and stability**, *through civil documentation, social protection schemes, livelihoods, and education.*

The roadmap also acknowledges that return to areas of origin is not always possible, and that relocation to other areas or local integration where people currently reside are equally valid pathways to durable solutions. Both the Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government have committed to supporting these alternatives.

As UN Durable Solutions actors, our role is not to substitute government functions, but to support national and subnational authorities in assuming their responsibilities. To advance national ownership, the government has taken on key roles in coordinating displacement efforts. In several conflict-affected governorates, local coordination platforms known as Joint Coordination Forums are now co-led by both government and UN partners. Importantly, the day-to-day management of these forums has been handed over to local authorities.

To date, data from four key governorates shows that around 40–57% of returnee households have achieved “high progress” across key reintegration indicators, meaning they are now safely housed, economically active, documented, and accessing basic services.

I also want to take the opportunity to particularly welcome the Secretary-General’s **Action Agenda on Internal Displacement** and the establishment of the Interagency **Solutions Hub**. The deployment of a **Solutions Advisor** to my office and the designation of **UNHCR, IOM, and UNDP as Solutions Champions**. These are tangible demonstrations of the system’s renewed commitment, and **I thank and congratulate my colleague, Robert Piper, for spearheading this shift.**

We have also worked to institutionalize the solutions agenda within our broader development cooperation framework. Durable solutions are now a pillar of the new UNSDCF in Iraq. This ensures that displacement is not treated as a parallel humanitarian issue but is addressed within the national development agenda.

Looking ahead, one of the most important opportunities lies in strengthening the alignment of displacement data across the Government of Iraq institutions and the United Nations. While progress has been made, discrepancies in data continue to present challenges to coordinated planning and equitable service delivery. This is a critical priority for us to ensure that all displaced populations are visible in national planning and policy.

My office, in collaboration with UN-Habitat, IOM, and UNDP, has developed a **joint programme supported by the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund** to work in close partnership with national stakeholders to harmonize displacement data systems and establish a unified evidence base. This effort is critical to ensuring that solutions for displaced populations remain firmly embedded as a national priority.

Let me close by saying that the displacement caseload in Iraq may be shrinking, but our responsibility to support the government in ending protracted displacement is only growing. We look to the UN development system and to forums like this one to continue the exchange of lessons learned and experiences.

Thank you.